

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel Claim 33, and amend Claims 18, 23 and 34 as set forth below. Claim 35 is also being added. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-17. (Cancelled).

18. (Currently Amended) A method for treating conditions associated with the loss of cardiac muscle contractility comprising:

delivering an expression construct to myocytes therein, wherein the expression construct provides an expressible polynucleotide encoding a ~~dominant-negative~~ phospholamban molecule having a single or double point mutation in Domains I or II thereof, wherein the mutation is sufficient to provide the phospholamban molecule with dominant-negative characteristics, and wherein further expression of the polynucleotide accelerates SERCA2 mediated calcium ion transport in the treated myocytes to improve cardiac muscle contractility.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the expression construct is a viral vector.

20. (Cancelled).

21. (Cancelled).

22. (Cancelled).

23. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as in~~ according to claim 18, wherein the ~~dominant-negative phospholamban comprises a phospholamban molecule containing a single or double point mutation in Domain Ia thereof, the effect of which~~ the mutation is to diminish the

inhibitory activity of the phospholamban molecule on SERCA2 ~~mutated to imitate phosphorylation of phospholamban.~~

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein the viral vector is a DNA vector.

25. (Withdrawn). The method as in claim 18, wherein the coding sequence is RNA.

26. (Withdrawn) A method for treatment of heart failure comprising:

delivery of a DNA construct to heart comprising a coding sequence for an antisense phospholamban RNA wherein transcription of the coding sequence is controlled by a promoter functional in heart and the antisense phospholamban RNA increases cardiac contractility or cardiac relaxation.

27. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the coding sequence is delivered using a viral vector.

28. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the coding sequence is delivered by injection into the heart.

29. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the coding sequence is delivered by direct injection into the heart.

30. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the coding sequence is delivered by transcatheter injection into the heart.

31. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the coding sequence is DNA.

32. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 23, wherein the mutated phospholamban has a point mutation consisting of R14E, S16N, S16E or K3E/R14E.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 23 ~~33~~, wherein the mutated phospholamban has a point mutation consisting of V49A.

35. (New) The method according to Claim 18, wherein the condition associated with a loss of cardiac muscle contractility is congestive heart failure.